

COVID-19 Sample Reopening Plan

Discovery Park of America

Submitted by: Scott Williams, President & CEO

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To help museums share thinking as they navigate the challenges and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance is compiling examples of reopening plans from individual institutions. These plans are specific to each museum's circumstances and are not meant to be definitive guidance for developing your own. Instead, they provide reference for what other museums are considering as they chart a course toward safely reopening. Check the Alliance's [reopening guide](#) frequently for updates, as we will be adding new examples as we receive them. If you have a plan or perspective on reopening you'd be interested in sharing with the broader museum field, please contact content@aam-us.org.

Disclaimer: This sample document serves as an example of how one museum addresses a particular issue. Museums should compose original materials based on their unique circumstances. Any document produced by the recipient should not substantially use the contents of this sample as the basis. Materials are provided "as is," without any guarantee or warranty of any kind, expressed or implied. Information shared here is not intended to supersede guidance from public health officials, medical experts, and federal/state/local governments. Museums are encouraged to seek legal and other expert advice on their specific circumstances.

Support Free COVID-19 Resources for the Museum Field

AAM maintains an online collection of more than 1,000 sample policies, plans, and forms from museums of all types and sizes through the Alliance's [sample document library](#). Access is a benefit to staff of [Tier 3 member museums](#). Given the current crisis, this and other resources have been taken out from behind our member paywall to make them free and accessible for all. The current crisis is taking a distressing financial toll on cultural organizations, and AAM is no different. In these challenging times, we ask that if you can, consider supporting our [advocacy work](#) and making extensive [COVID-19 resources](#) freely available for our field, by [making a donation](#) or [becoming a member](#) of AAM. Thank you for your much-needed support.



DISCOVERY PARK OF AMERICA

See beyond.

Spring and Summer 2020 Reopening Plan

Updated May 6, 2020

Overview

Since Discovery Park of America opened its doors in 2008, millions of children and adults have benefited from the big idea of Robert Kirkland and the community of Union City, Tennessee to create a place where inspiration would happen every single day. That means inspiration to learn, inspiration to grow, inspiration to consider new ideas and inspiration to see beyond wherever an individual is in life, regardless of age or education.

After closing our 100,000-square-foot museum and 50-acre heritage park on March 17, 2020 because of the threat brought on by the worldwide coronavirus outbreak, our goal has been the safety and welfare of our community, guests and staff. While it saddened us to have to move and cancel events and close our museum and park to the public, we knew it was the best thing to do for all the communities we serve.

Our goal from the beginning has been a slow and steady implementation of plans that were developed with input from our trusted partners and with the flexibility and freedom to pivot whenever required. Additionally, our board, executive committee and our organization's directors are leading with an abundance of empathy for our staff, vendors and members.

Staffing Since March 17, 2020

During this time, we've created work for our staff that could be done from home with or without a computer or internet access and our leadership team quickly began preparing for a post-coronavirus environment. Tasks worked on by various staff have included:

- Expanded and updated contacts on regional media list
- Building separate, targeted databases of individuals with interest in science, history and art including message boards, bloggers, podcasts, societies, etc.
- Building a database of all education leaders in our feeder markets including school board members, principals, administrators, college professors, etc.
- Spreadsheet of historic dates with connection to exhibits, artifacts and/or galleries at Discovery Park
- Handwritten note and 2019 Impact Report mailed to stakeholders, donors and potential donors

Leadership has been focused on:

- Frequent and honest communication with our Discovery Park teammates
- Frequent and honest communication with our stakeholders and the communities we serve
- Appointment of Discovery Park Coronavirus Task Force with meetings twice a week to troubleshoot, address issues and plan for reopening while keeping our teammates, guests and community safe. Operationally, our directors in each discipline like archives, human resources, operations, development, etc. are all staying connected to their various industry groups and peers and reporting back best practices to the task force for consideration
- Appointment of New Business Development Task Force to help us pivot our financial model with the loss of much of our "hands-on" content

- Assisting our community by sharing health and safety information through our digital resources including email, social media and our website

Reopening Plan

- **Communication:** Our plan to reopen continues the focus of frequent and honest communication established while closed but shifts the focus to helping staff understand the new world we're working in and the public know what we're doing so they can make an educated choice to visit Discovery Park when we reopen
- **Retraining:** retraining all staff to follow the healthiest operational procedures possible by following recommendations from industry partners like our [local health care system](#), [the CDC](#), State of Tennessee Department of Tourism ([Tennessee Pledge](#)) and the [American Association of Museums](#)
- **What and When:** determining what part of our museum and park can be safely reopened, when it can be reopened and how we can slowly open in stages and test our policies and procedures to quickly pivot and make changes as needed
- **Operations:** how should our daily operations change based on input from our partners, analysis of best practices and observations as we move through the process from closed to fully open in the future

Reopening Overview

The Discovery Park Coronavirus Task Force recommended opening the outside 50-acre heritage park with outdoor entry only for a weekend for members only to test our new operations before opening the outside only for the general public. A parking lot next to our North Gate will be blocked off to allow for lines of six feet or more for family groups, security bag checks will take place from a distance and we will no longer accept cash for payment. We've raised our online discount to 15% and we're encouraging tickets be purchased in advance for "touchless admission."

Free individual hand sanitizer packets will be available throughout the museum and park for guests and, while they last, we will distribute free face masks provided by the state of Tennessee to our local health department.

We've added four large drums from which guests can pull out an individual alcohol wipes and 14 additional hand sanitizers.

Plexiglass shields have been added at all registers.

Our museum and park is well known and frequently recognized for cleanliness. In the past, our housekeeping crew worked primarily at night, but we're shifting their schedules so some will be cleaning in the daytime and will visible to guests. Docents have also had several cleaning tasks added to their list of duties.

All teammate's temperatures will be checked upon arrival to work and masks will be required when working around guests. We will have a nurse on duty when we are open.

Food and beverage will be prepackaged only.

Reopening Schedule

Sat., May 30 and Sun., May 31, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Members Only Opening – Outdoor Heritage Park

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- Outside of park open for members only following strict health and safety guidelines
- Entrance to park through North Gate only, bag check
- Lower level restrooms in Discovery Center open with access from outside under the gargoyle walkway
- Eats 'n' Treats and the Ice Cream Parlor will be open following [guidelines for restaurants from the Tennessee Pledge](#)
- The main Discovery Center gift shop, with access through the main front door, will be open
- There will be no public access to the restrooms on the main floor of Discovery Center
- Gate at the Depot will open for exit only beginning at 3 p.m.
- Hugh Wade Feed Store will be open

Mon., June 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Public Opening – Heritage Park

-
- Outside of park open for the public following strict health and safety guidelines
- Entrance to park through North Gate only, bag check
- Lower level restrooms in Discovery Center open with access from outside under the gargoyle walkway
- Eats 'n' Treats and the Ice Cream Parlor will be open following [guidelines for restaurants from the Tennessee Pledge](#)
- The main Discovery Center gift shop, with access through the main front door, will be open
- There will be no public access to the restrooms on the main floor of Discovery Center
- Gate at the Depot will open for exit only beginning at 3 p.m.
- Hugh Wade Feed Store will be open

Fri., June 26, 2020

Rentals Begin

- Rentals allowed, but under a very strict [set of guidelines](#) that our customers will be required to agree to and follow

Fri., June 26, 2020

Public Opening – Heritage Park and Museum

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- Outside of park and Heritage Center open for public following strict health and safety guidelines
- Entrance to park through North Gate AND through main entrance
- Eats 'n' Treats and the Ice Cream Parlor will be open following [guidelines for restaurants from the Tennessee Pledge](#)
- The main Discovery Center gift shop, with access through the main front door, will be open

- Gate at the Depot will open for exit only beginning at 3 p.m.

Beginning Sat. May 30, 2020, the gift shop will be open seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. There will be no public access to the restrooms on that floor until we open Discovery Center to the public on June 26.

The Escape Room and the Children's Playground will be closed, and we are following the guidelines of 50% capacity in each of our outdoor experiences throughout the park. The entrance to the park will be located at the North Ticket Gate, and guests will be encouraged to purchase tickets in advance for "no-touch" admission.

The Simmons Bank Children's Exploration Gallery, including the Giant Man Slide, the Escape Room, the added attractions and the outdoor Children's Discovery Garden outdoor playground will be closed until further notice.

Health and Safety Guidelines for Guests:

To make your experience more enjoyable, please note the following guidelines:

- No food or drinks may be brought into the park from outside.
- No pets.
- No weapons.
- All bags will be checked.
- Please do not enter the park if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, are experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat right now, or have experienced symptoms like a fever, a new loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea or fever in the last 48 hours.
- Cash is not accepted at this time.
- Please maintain a safe distance of at least six feet between your group and employees and other visitors near you while at Discovery Park.
- You will see hand-sanitizing stations throughout the museum and park. Please use those frequently.
- Be sure to wash hands more frequently, avoid touching your face, practice good respiratory etiquette like sneezing into your elbow rather than into the air.
- We're limiting the number of guests allowed in at one time for many of our experiences; so please follow guidelines that are posted at the entrance to each building.
- Prepackaged food and beverage are available in the park.
- A nurse is always on duty. Should you feel you need one at any time, just let one of our staff know.

Health and Safety Guidelines for Employees

Version 4, Updated May 6, 2020

Introduction

Since Discovery Park of America first closed on March 17, 2020 because of the threat brought on by the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak, our goal has been the safety and welfare of our community, guests and staff and to have frequent and honest communication as together we

navigate these uncharted waters. Those goals will continue as we plan and implement Discovery Park's return to serving guests from around the country.

We plan for a gradual reopening, with room to adjust as we evaluate changing data, input from our local, state and federal government and feedback from our team on the front lines as we begin once again welcoming guests to our museum and park.

A crucial part of our plan is dependent on every individual on the Discovery Park team committing to diligently following the guidelines and protecting themselves, their co-workers and our guests.

This plan will be frequently updated and redistributed as we learn from experience and believe it is safe to open more of the Discovery Park experience to guests.

Screening Before Arrival to Work

All teammates must enter through the South Gate and stop at the health checkpoint at Tram Stop B. During stormy weather conditions, this checkpoint will be at the bottom of the stairs near the loading dock. Teammates reporting to work will be screened for respiratory symptoms and have their body temperature taken as a precautionary measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Everyone will be privately screened, including having his or her temperature taken, when reporting to work. The screening questions are:

- Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
- Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Do you have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more?
- Your temperature and answers to respiratory symptom questions will be documented, and the record will be maintained as a private medical record.

If you know you can answer yes to any of those questions, do not come to work. Instead, let your manager know you will be unable to work your shift and we encourage you to utilize the Center for Disease Control's online self-checker and/or visit one of the COVID-19 testing locations as a precaution. Discovery Park of America leadership is dedicated to allowing you to maintain the confidentiality of your health information.

The same direction applies if you did not realize you had a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more and find out during the screening.

You can return to work when:

- You have had no fever for at least three (3) days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; AND
- Any respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) have improved for at least three (3) days; AND
- At least seven (7) days have passed since the symptoms began.

- You may return to work earlier if a doctor confirms the cause of your fever or other symptoms is not COVID-19 and releases you to return to work in writing.

Clocking In

When clocking in, please use the QR code you will be provided to clock in before your shift. This will allow you to avoid touching the time clock. Your temperatures will be taken in private in advance of beginning work each day.

Immediately after clocking in or arriving in the building for work, all employees must wash their hands with soap and warm water for 30 seconds or more.

Disposable masks, gloves and pre-packaged alcohol wipes will be placed near the time clock for you to pick up when you arrive and will be available to you throughout the day.

Increased Hygiene Practices

There are many things you can do throughout the day that will offer more protection for you and those you are around.

- Be sure to wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette by coughing or sneezing into your elbow rather than into the air
- Wear a cloth face covering while at work and in public to help protect against the spread of the virus (these will be provided, or you can wear one you bring from home)
- Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible – “Further is safer”
- If your position requires the use of disposable gloves, be sure to change as often as recommended
- You will see new hand-sanitizing stations throughout the museum and park. Please use those frequently
- Social distancing is challenging in many of our jobs in the hospitality sector, but remember to keep as much distance as possible between you and your teammates and our guests

Breakroom

The breakroom is closed for breaks until further notice. You will find microwaves for your use in the catering kitchen and additional tables have been set up outside and in front of the catering kitchen. Please remember to keep as much distance as possible between you and your teammates.

General Operating Guidelines Museum and Park

Every position at Discovery Park has different requirements and requires a different set of operational guidelines, so managers will be working with each department individually on those. However, we do want everyone on the Discovery Park of America team to be aware of some of the guidelines we'll be implementing as we first reopen to the public.

- Entry to the park is through the North Gate. Bag checks will still be in effect but will be accomplished while maintaining a distance of six feet or more

- We're encouraging guests to purchase tickets online in advance of when they arrive (the discount for online tickets is now 15%). This will allow for "no-touch" admission
- We are not accepting cash at this time but will be accepting credit and debit cards
- No signature will be required for any purchases below \$300
- Signage with health and safety instructions will be placed at the North Gate and throughout the park
- A nurse will be available throughout the day to take the temperature of guests or team members who request it
- Food service will be provided at Eats 'n' Treats with pre-packaged food and beverage and disposable utensils only, and while Discovery Park was closed, the previous restaurant was torn down and a new one built to enable our teammates working there to implement new COVID-19 procedures including social distancing
- All outdoor tables have been spaced at six or more feet apart
- We have doubled the number of those working in housekeeping during the day and have a crew that is coming in at night to deep clean, and when we are closed on Tues. and Wed., a large crew is deep cleaning all surfaces in the park.
- Handless door openers have been installed throughout

General Guidelines for Rentals and Events

Updated May 6, 2020

Current Rentals Status: Discovery Park is currently planning to make the museum and park available for rentals under very strict guidelines beginning June 26, 2020. While Discovery Park will take into consideration the current recommendations for restaurants and event spaces from state and federal government guidelines, Discovery Park reserves the right to create more conservative guidelines at its own discretion at any time.

- Buffets are not permitted
- Live music is not permitted
- Dancing is not permitted
- Bars are not permitted
- Physical distancing recommendations of six or more feet apart is currently being followed. "Further is safer"
- The number of guests is limited to 50% of capacity
- All staff will be required to wear a cloth face covering during set up and tear down of tables, chairs and bars including cleaning off and disposing of items on tables
- All staff working event must have temperature taken when entering the building
- All staff must wash hands for 30 seconds or more after entering the building
- Only disposable cutlery, cups and plates will be allowed on tables, at bars, etc.
- Condiments on a counter for use by multiple tables is not permitted
- Beverage station re-use is not permitted
- No more than 6 guests per table (rather than the usual 10 per table) although cocktail rounds are strongly encouraged
- Tables must be spaced 6 feet or more apart
- All transactions under \$300 must be no touch, credit and debit card, no cash

- All catering staff must always wear gloves and masks while handling food and beverage, no exception

Communication

Teammates

A landing page for teammates and our board was established on March 16, 2020 before we closed to the public at DiscoveryParkofAmerica.com/team. Copies of all e-mails, helpful links and resources have been posted there. Additionally, a private Facebook for current employees was created to provide a way for everyone to stay personally connected during this time.

Additionally, our senior leadership team is recording periodic updates on the various areas of our museum and park to share with staff.

General Public

We've increased the amount of online content shared from our outdoors heritage park to encourage visitation when we do open. To announce our opening, we released a [notice to the press](#), recorded [a message for social distribution with our president and CEO](#) and have been reaching out through a variety of sources to get information out about our park and opening schedule.

We will continue to use all our tools to frequently communicate the tactics being implemented by staff to encourage the general public to visit Discovery Park when opened and to follow the guidelines to stay healthy and safe.

Additionally, a signage program has been developed with guidance for staying safe that will be in place when we open.

We have one primary landing page for guests we are using to communicate the hours of operation and what is open: <https://discoveryparkofamerica.com/visit/tickets-information/>

Press Release

Discovery Park of America Announces Reopening Plans

May 4, 2020

Union City, Tenn.—While [Discovery Park of America](#) will remain closed to the public through May 2020, the museum and heritage park is planning to reopen the outside areas for members only on Sat., May 30 and Sun., May 31, 2020 following strict social distancing guidelines.

The 50-acre heritage park will then open to the general public beginning June 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and be closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays for deep cleaning. Discovery Center, the museum at Discovery Park, will remain closed at this time. While most of the outside areas will be open to the public beginning June 1, the Children's Discovery Garden Playground will be closed until further notice. The entrance to Discovery Park will be through the outside North Ticket Gate.

A task force made up of managers of various departments at Discovery Park has been working extensively on guidelines for employees and guests to the park that incorporate the [“Tennessee Pledge”](#) guidance from Gov. Bill Lee’s [Tennessee Economic Recovery Group](#).

“As one of our leading museums and attractions in the state, we’ve been working closely with Discovery Park’s leadership to provide information and guidance as they create their reopening plan,” said Tennessee Department of Tourist Development’s commissioner, Mark Ezell, who is also chairing the Tennessee Economic Recovery Group. “We need Tennessee businesses like Discovery Park to step up and pledge to follow the guidelines developed by the recovery group. It is critically important that we maintain our commitment to social distancing and adhere to these new guidelines so that we can continue to reopen our economy.”

Employees of Discovery Park will be following new procedures that include temperature checks, masks and a strict social distancing policy. Guests will also be given guidelines that will allow them to enjoy the park while ensuring their health and safety. A complete list of the new guidelines for guests can be found on [Discovery Park’s website](#).

“Since Discovery Park of America first closed on March 17, 2020 because of the threat brought on by the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak, our goal has been the safety and welfare of our community, guests and staff,” said Scott Williams, Discovery Park’s president and CEO. “Our plan for reopening continues that commitment by incorporating a nurse on duty when we are open, extensive deep-cleaning procedures, limiting the number of guests in our smaller areas and ongoing evaluation and implementation of best practices as we make this incredible outdoor space available to guests once again.”

The Discovery Park task force will continue to monitor the data and review state and federal guidelines to determine if changes to the reopening schedule are required and to set an opening date for the museum.

New Business Development

A small task force of directors who manage revenue-generating areas has been formed and tasked with generating new opportunities for generating revenue, especially outside, that align with our mission to inspire children and adults to see beyond. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, revenue from ticket sales is where we get a big portion of our annual operating budget. Several of the experiences for which we charge an additional ticket, like our earthquake experience and enhanced movies, will be greatly reduced in availability. Additionally, as a museum with a focus on “hands-on” activities, we must reimagine our experience and how we talk about it until a vaccine is readily available.

This task force includes three board members and will meet weekly as long as needed to determine what ideas should be tested, review the results and continue experimenting with new ideas for generating revenue. This also extends to our development program.

Conclusion

This is an unprecedented challenge for our generation of museum professionals. Regardless of the eventual outcome, the leadership team of Discovery Park of America has committed to a slow and steady implementation of plans that we’ve developed with input from our trusted partners. We will continue to implement tactics with the health and safety of our teammates,

guests and community in mind while heartily embracing the flexibility and freedom to pivot as often as required. Additionally, our board, executive committee and our organization's directors will continue to lead with an abundance of empathy for our staff, vendors, guests and members and we navigate through this difficult time.